CHAPTER XIX

RELIGION

PAGANISM [1]

THE people of the Philippines are predominantly Roman Catholics in religion. Close to eighty per cent of the entire population adhere to this faith. The Independent Filipino Church, composed of the Aglipayanos, accounts for another ten per cent, the Mohammedans for four per cent, the Protestants for a little over one per cent, and the rest are pagans.

The primitive religion of the Filipinos was Anism, a sort of ancestor worship. Then arrived the banner of Islam and it swept triumphantly over the Islands of Mindanao and Sulu to the south. The spread of Mohammedanism was stayed by the coming of the Spaniards, who baptized the people *en masse* as Catholics. After the Philippine Revolution the schism from Rome of the Independent Filipino Church occurred.

Finally, with the American flag came the Protestant missionaries. That is a tabloid sketch of religious history in the Philippines.

But we were to speak more precisely of paganism. The early Filipinos were in their way intensely religious. They worshipped the souls of departed ancestors represented by *anitos* (idols). They believed in fates and were fond of myths and whispered stories. They were full of taboos and superstitions. Their most omnipotent God, if one may use the

word reverently in this connection, was called by the Tagalogs "Bathala" and by the Visayans "Lauon." That the religion of

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